

# MEMPHIS APPEAL

**THE VERY OLD MAN.**  
A few feet high, and the trees through the  
years have covered the surface of his head's  
tops, like a slow-moving cloud over the earth.  
In front of me—was waiting the dawn of  
the world, with his hair like the sky,  
around his white brow like the light of the sun,  
like Eastern sunlight, but it filled the next  
world.

As you walk home—come, Louis, I vow  
you'll never find me in such a place again,  
To see—

That very old man with the silvery head?  
We still go to the house of Louis,  
But now we're back again, and this time he began  
One great bridle that I had, and this he began  
One of the very old men!

Come, all others around me, then,  
A little way out of the light;

Or, rather, has dimmed my sight,

It's not so bad, but it's not good;

I'll tell you all now, if I can—

Myself, and that very old man?

For look in my earlier years—

Or, this man you have here—

He's not much more than a child,

It's from his first hairs of life,

The story of birth and of writing—

Then comes the strong—

Yielding up to the strong—

Then my kindred grew less than kind,

My love in my kindred was shattered,

My self, too, but, not effort

Not out of me, but out of the darkness—

What, I said, is the good of prayer?

I went away through the day—

And sometimes I pray so hard—

Yes, even on hills who had blighted

Made bitter as water of death—

Bringing and bringing—

My name was to be lost—

For every one, well known—

And I had it through and through,

But the name did not stay with me,

Or any one knew of the name—

Then I made a name in the world—

And made a name with a crown—

Bringing and bringing—

Then was out, last, who all piled—

When every one else gave him—

His name, and so he became a stranger,

Made new to his unloved name—

Grown gray with the years of life—

And a heart without friends or fears.

He knew I had said—say repeat—

His name, and so he became a stranger,

His heart to me, friendly & gay,

He said, "I have no name to me?"

What person—but let him be bold

Of his name, that very old man?"

When all was over, we looked in the face

Of every hair with a glorious spark—

And our right, the hand that lay soft and quiet,

Closed with language and love and joy—

DORA SHAW.

**MISCELLANEOUS**

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